

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

Community Care Licensing Division  
Statewide Children's Residential Program  
Out-of-State Certification Unit

**OUT-OF-STATE ANNUAL REVIEW****GEORGE JR. REPUBLIC**

223 George Jr. Road, P. O. Box 1058  
Grove City, Pennsylvania 16127

**FACILITY VISIT DATES:** June 27, 2006

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES STAFF MEMBER:**

Kathy Bakke, Licensing Program Analyst

**PURPOSE OF VISIT:**

George Jr. Republic (GJR) is seeking re-certification with the State of California, Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing, Out-of-State Certification Unit. The purpose of this visit is to verify the facility is in compliance with California Group Home Licensing standards in order to become re-certified.

**CALIFORNIA PLACING AGENCIES:**

San Francisco County is the only California County making placements to this facility.

**FACILITY and PHYSICAL PLANT OVERVIEW:**

GJR is a 400-acre campus located in the city limits of Grove City, Pennsylvania. The capacity is 510. Census during this visit is 481 boys. GJR currently holds 52 separate licenses for individual cottages located on the main campus. GJR also operates five licensed residential group homes off campus, with a total capacity of 32. These homes are located in and around Grove City.

The non-public school located on campus is fully accredited to state standards. Staff are employed by the Grove City Area School District and include 55 credentialed teachers, including 20 special education teachers and an additional 25 instructional aides. The academic program is provided by the Grove City School District and is administered in the school building on campus. Students may be enrolled in a completely academic program with the goal of attending college or they may be better served attending an academic program for half day, and a vocational-technical program for the other half. Children in general residential attend the main school on campus. Buildings on campus include a chapel, bowling alley, diagnostic building, vocational/technical building, three gymnasiums with a weight room,

student union with movie theaters, infirmary, a warehouse for food and other supplies, administrative buildings, special needs, crisis intervention, and orientation building. There are two swimming pools, a ropes facility with climbing wall, two softball fields, tennis courts, all-weather track, basketball courts, football field and horse stables.

The individual residential cottages, bedrooms, kitchens, bathrooms, and storage areas are clean, orderly, and decorated. There is adequate living space and areas inside and outside for recreation. The campus grounds are well-groomed throughout.

### **FIRE CLEARANCE:**

Fire clearances are conducted by the Grove City Pine Township Engine Company, Volunteer Fireman's Relief Association. The last fire inspection provided for this review was conducted on November 22, 2005. Target facilities were toured. A general campus orientation for firefighters and a review of campus emergency procedures were conducted. Fire inspection noted that a sprinkler system has been added to a building.

Fire drills are conducted once a month during normal staffing, on different days and at different times.

### **LOCAL STATE LICENSING/COMPLAINT ISSUES:**

GJR is licensed by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Public Welfare (DWP). There are 52 licensed residential houses on campus and five licensed community based houses. They are licensed as Child Residential and Day Treatment Facilities. License effective dates are from February 1, 2006 to February 1, 2007. Copies of licenses were provided.

### **HEALTH DEPARTMENT CLEARANCES:**

There is no campus cafeteria as residents eat in their individual residences. Since the residents do not use a common cafeteria, the facility is exempt from Department of Health oversight and inspection. Food service, preparation, sanitation, and storage are inspected by DWP. Food supplies are stored in the warehouse; a dietician prepares menus. Food is delivered to each house and each set of house parents is responsible for the meals in their individual houses.

### **ADMINISTRATION AND PLAN OF OPERATION REVIEW:**

Richard Losasso is the Chief Executive Officer; Pat Farrone has retired. A complete personnel roster was submitted. There were no issues related to intake procedures, care and supervision, or operating out of capacity. DWP investigates all complaints,

concerns and questionable incidents. The supervisor of the licensing worker from DWP, who is responsible for inspecting this facility, stated that there are no legal actions or unresolved complaints. GJR is responsive and submits any needed plans of correction in a timely manner. Reporting requirements were discussed with supervisor of DWP, and with an administrator of the facility. All incidents regarding California placements are reported as required. Administrator stated that comprehensive reports are submitted twice a year with a summary of incidents including AWOLs, restraints, injuries, and other reportable issues.

Currently there are five California placements.

Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, West Virginia, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, California, Delaware, Texas, Florida, Montana, Illinois, New York and Bermuda place with GJR. Currently, there are 120 out-of-state placements.

### **PROGRAM REVIEW AND CHANGES:**

GJR remains one of the largest, private, nonprofit residential treatment facilities in the United States. The overall program is designed to meet the needs of children who have histories of emotional disturbances, delinquency, aggression, truancy, abuse, and neglect. The facility operates on the premise that not all children can be rehabilitated by implementing a single strategy. There are five programs (components) that have been established to help each resident reach their full potential. They are the General Residential, Special Needs, Diagnostic, Drug and Alcohol, and Community Based Homes. Residents' living arrangements may differ. However, each resident participates in daily scheduled activities, attends school, and is evaluated using the education/behavior modification system. GJR offers a variety of recreational activities including varsity and intramural sports, club activities (golf, weight-lifting, billiards, equestrian riding), and off campus activities.

The goal of the General Residential component is to provide each resident with a structured, fair, firm and consistent environment in which to develop appropriate socialization skills. The component serves boys ages 9 through 18. Upon admission each child is oriented to campus rules and regulations, is assessed and enrolled in education and vocational programs, and is given a physical exam. The child begins with a two to four week temporary residency in an orientation unit where his initial service plan is completed. The orientation program facilitates a smoother transition and allows staff the opportunity to observe the child.

In the residential component, residents are provided the opportunity to gain the necessary social and coping skills needed for successful readjustment to society. Behavioral and clinical efforts are focused on teaching new behaviors and resolving dysfunctional behavioral and emotional patterns. The residential component is designed to teach, correct, and reinforce alternative behaviors. Positive behavior is reinforced and rewarded; negative actions are identified, defined and corrected by

the use of teaching and reinforcement. A resident will include the following in his daily routine: Participation in victim awareness groups; community services and restitution as determined by the placement worker; learn and implement basic social skills including accepting constructive negative criticism; learn to accept “no” for an answer; learn to apply the social skills within family structure; establish study skills and, develop a realistic plan for education and training goals for employment. A resident will participate in incorporating a plan for living arrangements after leaving the facility; will resolve emotional issues which hinder the ability to function in the community; develop the ability to think through decisions and understand consequences; develop self-discipline and apply this to behavior during home visits, and complete at least 2 successful home passes prior to discharge. Average length of stay is 9 -12 months; although there are some residents who stay “for the duration.”

In this component counselor/parents (live-in married couples) implement the teacher/parent model, which is a behavioral/educational model. Group living is a key ingredient at GJR. Eight to ten boys live in campus homes, each with a roommate, and the counselor/parents. At least one counselor/parent must have completed, at the minimum, a BA in the social sciences area. The social worker (master's level therapist) provides individual and group therapy and implements a treatment program to meet the individual needs of each resident, in conjunction with supportive services. Psychological testing and psychiatric evaluations are included.

Each new resident is given basic education tests so that he may be appropriately placed in school. The academic programs include elementary, junior and senior high school, and special education. GED preparation, remedial reading and math are also available. School is in operation 11 months per year. A formal skill-training vocational program is also offered. Areas include auto mechanics, auto body repair, building trades, metal fabrication/welding, culinary arts/food service, electronics and computer technology/networking, first aide. Driver's education is offered. Music studies and skills will be offered this fall.

The majority of the residents are involved in academics for a half day and vocations for a half day. Class size ranges from 12 to 15 students.

The EXCEL program operates before and after school to assist residents who are behind in school to make up credits so that they may return to their appropriate grade level. SAT and ACT preparatory classes are also offered for those interested in attending college.

Most activities are on campus and most are held in the athletic complex, which houses a gym, three locker rooms, racquetball and hand ball court, and an outdoor swimming pool. The residents may ride bicycles on campus. The four varsity sports are basketball, track and field, soccer, and baseball, horseback riding and 4H

programs, and weight lifting program. Off campus activities include going to sporting events and amusement parks.

Adventure Based Counseling is offered which compliments traditional treatment approaches by teaching transferable adventure and life skills. The goal of the program is to help residents make positive decisions, discover functional ways of relating to the outside world, and to move beyond self-imposed limitations. There is an elaborate climbing wall on the campus, and the "course" offers several challenging individual and group obstacles ranging from ground level to 40-foot elevations. All safety features are observed. When participating, residents exercise problem solving and trust building skills, they cope with fear and pressure, with the goal of taking healthy risks. When a resident is encouraged to climb higher with the support of his peers he is actually being asked to try to take a risk and trust that he can overcome obstacles in his life.

The Special Needs component is developed to meet the needs of residents that are unable to be treated in an open residential environment. The objective of the program is to provide treatment in order to affect the ability of the resident to become functional in a less restrictive, open residential setting. There are a total of 118 beds, and the units are designed to provide the resident with an individual bedroom, access to a time out room, and individualized educational programs and therapy. Considerations in building design were given to space, durability, indestructibility, education, recreation, dining, visiting, and injury prevention, with a natural home-like environment utilizing lighting and therapeutic color schemes. This is a staff-secure, self-contained, highly structured component, locked from the outside. Residents enter and exit with staff. Nurses go to the special needs units to distribute medications.

Special Needs offers a psychiatric program for youth who are moderately to severely emotionally disturbed. The program operates from the multi-disciplinary treatment team approach. Staff is highly qualified, and well-trained in psychiatry, clinical social work, special education, psychology, health and mental health, recreation and art therapy. Education of staff ranges from BA degrees to PhD. The goals of this program are to help the resident to develop emotional stability so that he is not a danger to himself or others through psychiatric supervision and intense therapy, to teach the resident social skills necessary to enable him to function with decreased supervision without crises which would affect placement (AWOL, attempted suicide), to help the resident develop self-control so that he may have a successful home visit (if he has a home), to assist the resident in managing medication treatment and intervention so that he may successfully manage long term mental health needs. Treatment plans include specific short and long-term goals and objectives, which are reviewed weekly. Special needs residents are educated within their units and do not attend the main, on-ground school.

The Diagnostic Center offers residential diagnostic placement service to children ages 10 to 18 for whom placement options are not readily available due to the nature and severity of their emotional and behavioral issues. The center is a staff secure, self-contained facility with 24-hour supervision. It is a 10-bed unit with a living/dining area, classroom, kitchen, conference room, and office and time-out room. The objective of the diagnostic program is to conduct a 75-day diagnostic evaluation, including a psychiatric evaluation, behavioral observations, in-depth social, physical, drug and alcohol, psychological, educational, social and behavioral histories. Children who are admitted to the center are unable to maintain appropriate levels of social interaction. They lack the ability to function without presenting a threat to themselves or others due to unique psychiatric and emotional needs. Results of the evaluations are discussed among treatment team members including the center director, a psychologist, educational psychologist, medical doctor and various other professionals, who formulate treatment goals and objectives and make placement recommendations to the child's referral agency. Placement recommendations may be to the GJR special needs component or residential program. This Diagnostic component has dealt successfully with the "hard to place" child and those children who have failed multiple placements. The residents attend a school program with a certified special education teacher, within the component.

The Drug and Alcohol Residential Rehabilitation component has been developed to provide for the education, intervention, treatment and rehabilitation of children in placement that have been significant and long-term chemical abuse. This component is also licensed by the Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Programs. There are three 10-bed homes available in this component. Staff are trained drug and alcohol counselor/parents, and there is a master's level certified addictions counselor who conducts therapy. The child is expected to identify and verbalize an accurate history of abusive patterns, and to identify the effects that chemical abuse have had in his life, in the areas of relationships, education, and vocation. The child will participate in self-help groups and will plan to attend groups during home passes and after discharge, will identify and begin to mend relationships, explore vocational interests and set goals for the future, participate in victim awareness, community services, restitution and victim empathy, complete successful home passes, develop social skills to enable him to function successfully in society, and identify individual needs, support services and seek out appropriate helpful resources. Each child in this component spends an hour per day completing a drug and alcohol manual. All children in this component are subject to drug screening which is a part of the admission agreement.

The Balanced Approach to Restorative Justice (PA Juv Justice Act 33) is incorporated, which calls attention to the importance of the victim (individual or property) in the justice process, and requires the offender to actively provide restoration to the victim. The offenders are held accountable to their victims by

paying restitution, performing community service and attending victim awareness classes.

The 120-Day Intermediate Drug and Alcohol component is designed to provide intensive short-term counseling. The goal is to provide education, intervention, treatment and rehabilitation of children that have been influenced by chemical abuse or dependency. Children with significant and prolonged use may be more appropriate for the longer-term drug and alcohol component. Upon admission the child is placed in the residential program for 30 days while being assessed; after 30 days he is transferred to one of the 10-bed intensive drug and alcohol units where he will receive individual counseling, NA and AA 3 times a week off campus, completion of the drug and alcohol manual, drug screening and post discharge recommendations. The treatment program emphasizes individual accountability, social responsibility, education and family relationships. The GJR behavior modification system provides the means to teaching the individual accountability. Positive and negative points are earned based on behaviors; consequences of behaviors are emphasized. The child must progress to the second level of the motivational system to earn a recommendation for discharge. The child attends counseling and school. He will complete community service hours, and complete a victim awareness program, participate in vocational guidance, attend 10 weeks of drug and alcohol prevention groups, will participate in anger management and conflict resolution skills.

GJR currently operates five Community Based Group Homes with a total capacity of 32 clients. The goal is to provide residents with the opportunity to readjust to a normalized home and community environment by engaging community resources. This is a transitional experience and residents who live in these homes are either preparing to return to their families or for life on their own, with little or no family support. Residents are given increased privileges and responsibilities such as part time jobs, entrance into the job market or the service, and are taught independent living skills, preparation for college or trade school,.

The Crises Intervention Unit serves the entire GJR population and is designed to provide for the safety and security of a resident by providing temporary time-out during emergency crises. There are 24 available beds and the component is self-contained. The component is based on conducting a functional analysis of the youth's emotional and social function which required this temporary placement. The resident must realize insight into alternative behaviors verbally and in writing, so that the resident may be reintegrated into the campus program in a minimal amount of time. Groups are conducted for anger management, peer pressure, anxiety and frustration, grief and loss, and the crisis intervention coordinator serves as a liaison with the resident and his direct care staff. This component provides educational services using special education teachers. There are opportunities for recreation and Adventure Based Counseling.

GJR also has a Preventative Aftercare Program which is designed to prevent out-of-home placement for at-risk children, reduce the length of out-of-home placement should it become necessary and decrease the chances of repeat offenses. GJR maintains 80 of these programs in 4 states. Services are provided to children and families in their homes, schools and community settings. Social workers are available 24 hours/day.

Wishert House, which has been used for residential dwellings in the past, edges the property on Route 58, and will be remodeled and used as a visitor center. Visitors will come off the public road, rather than go into campus. Family therapy will be provided at this location.

### **EMERGENCY INTERVENTION PLAN/INCIDENT REPORTS:**

GJR uses Safe Crisis Management; during this visit it was also called “physical restraint.” Incident reporting was discussed with the administrator, Jeff Morris. Reports on individual California placements are submitted in a timely manner. GJR will submit a summary of the on-going tracking data report twice a year. During last year’s visit, the issue of reporting requirements was addressed with a request for a plan of correction, which was submitted.

### **PERSONNEL AND CLIENT FILE REVIEW:**

Ten personnel files were reviewed and are in compliance with California standards. Six resident files were reviewed and are in compliance with California standards.

### **CLIENTS AND PERSONAL RIGHTS REVIEW:**

Upon admission, the student is informed of his personal rights, expectations, program structure, goals and philosophy.

The five California residents were interviewed. They appeared to understand the program, procedures, levels, consequences, standards, goals, education, vocations, personal rights and peer interaction. Residents are allowed to make and receive phone calls, and send and receive mail. Residents stated that they were involved in sports, vocational pursuits and education. They are receiving consistent therapy, medical attention when needed, and the food is good. Two of the residents stated that they were called inappropriate names while in the Crises Unit. This was discussed with Jeff Morris in the exit interview.

### **MEDICAL, DENTAL, AND NUTRITIONAL FOLLOW-UP SERVICES:**

GJR has a medical clinic on grounds. Within the clinic is a 2-bed infirmary, two exam rooms, a dental office, a lab and a psychiatric suite. A doctor is available three times a week and a dentist twice a week. The clinic is staffed by psychiatrists,



an optometrist, a dietitian, and nurses. Medical staff is on call 24-hours per day. In the case of a medical emergency, a resident is taken to the local hospital. Residents have no issues in this area.

#### **TREATMENT SERVICES (COUNSELING, GROUPS, THERAPY):**

GJR provides individual and group therapy and family counseling. Therapists have master's degrees and comprehensive experience. The residents at GJR have a variety of issues and traumas and therapy is designed to meet diverse needs. Residents may have individual and group therapy once a week or more often depending on their needs. Residents have no issues in this area.

#### **STAFF ORIENTATION AND TRAINING HOURS:**

Staff training is extensive. New staff receive 80 hours of initial training and all staff has at least 40 hours of annual training. Some training is provided from outside sources. Training topics covered include those required by California regulations.

#### **SCOPE OF CERTIFICATION REVIEW:**

Certification review covered the following: student and staff file review, interviews, intake and discharge procedures, discipline policy, emergency intervention, medical procedures, observation of program and daily activities, fire clearance, disaster plan, food service, training, and all issues pertaining to physical plant, personal rights and safety.

#### **OUT-OF-STATE CERTIFICATION FINDINGS:**

The licensee is required to prepare a Plan of Correction (POC) that will resolve the following issue:

1. Personal rights: during interviews with California residents, two indicated that they had been called inappropriate names by staff while in the Crises Intervention Unit.

#### **CERTIFICATION DECISION:**

Please submit a POC for the above issue by August 30, 2006. Include plan for training and monitoring employees while they are engaged in intense interaction with a resident who may be exhibiting difficult behavior.

Recommend that recertification be granted.